

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06970 171702Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 171554Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1532

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6970

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE
SUBJECT: VISIT OF FSO'S TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON

REF: (A) STATE 203248, (B) STATE 203878

1. WE AGREE THAT SECURITY RISKS FOR HOUGHTON AND MACK SHOULD BE MINIMAL ONCE THEY REACH CHRISTIAN-HELD TERRITORY. BOTH CHAMOUN AND DAHDAH HAVE STATED SECURITY IS NO PROBLEM IN THEIR AREA, AND WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT SITUATION THERE IS CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN IN WEST BEIRUT AT THIS TIME.

2. RE QUESTION OF INFORMING CHRISTIANS IN ADVANCE OF FSO'S VISIT, WE HAD RECOMMENDED THIS BOTH TO ASSURE THAT TOP CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE THEM AND TO TIE THEIR MISSION AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE TO THIS EMBASSY. OUR THOUGHT ON PASSING MESSAGES ACROSS CONFRONTATION LINE WAS THAT WE COULD GIVE LETTER TO RELIABLE TAXI DRIVER OR BUSINESSMAN WHO WOULD DELIVER IT TO FSL KHAWAND WHO RESIDENT IN EAST BEIRUT. FSL COULD IN TURN DELIVER IT TO ADDRESSEE AND INFORM US BY PHONE OR SIMILAR MESSENGER WHEN HE HAD DONE SO. WE WOULD HAVE TO ASSUME, OF COURSE, THAT ANY LETTER MIGHT BE INSPECTED AND/OR INTERCEPTED BY NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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CHRISTIAN GROUPS. WE HAD THEREFORE PLANNED TO AVOID

MENTIONING NAMES AND EXACT ARRIVAL TIME TO MINIMIZE SECURITY RISKS. THIS SAME RISK EXISTS IN USING TELEPHONE IF WE COULD (LINES TO EAST BEIRUT ARE STILL OUT), SINCE WE ASSUME ALL OUR CALLS ARE MONITORED. FURTHERMORE, IF WE INFORMED CHRISTIANS IN ADVANCE, WE COULD NOT BE SURE THE WORD WOULD NOT BE BROADCAST BY THEM.

3. FRENCH CHARGE HAS VISITED EAST BEIRUT ONLY ONCE IN LAST THREE WEEKS, DOES NOT DO SO REGULARLY, AND HAS NO PLANS AT PRESENT FOR SUCH A VISIT. ONLY "NEUTRALS" WE KNOW OF GOING BACK AND FORTH REGULARLY ARE ARAB LEAGUE REPS, AND WE DOUBT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO CARRY A MESSAGE FOR US FOR FEAR IT MIGHT COMPROMISE THEIR POSITION.

4. IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTORS AND DEPT'S CONCERNS, WE RECOMMEND THAT HOUGHTON AND MACK GO TO JOUNIEH WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE BUT CARRYING LETTERS FROM CHARGE HUNT TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE, AND POSSIBLY TO PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS. ASSUME SINCE HOUGHTON WELL KNOWN TO CHRISTIAN LEADERS, THEY WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE GETTING APPOINTMENTS. LETTERS WOULD EXPLAIN THAT SINCE NEITHER AMBASSADOR SEELYE NOR HE (HUNT) HAD BEEN ABLE TO CALL ON THEM BECAUSE OF SECURITY SITUATION, DEPT OF STATE HAD DECIDED TO SEND HOUGHTON AND MACK TO JOUNIEH TO REPRESENT THIS EMBASSY. WE REGRET WE WERE NOT ABLE TO INFORM THE PRESIDENT IN ADVANCE BECAUSE WE COULD NOT DO SO IN A SECURE MANNER. THE EMBASSY AND DEPT OF STATE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING THEIR VIEWS ON LEBANESE SITUATION. WE HOPE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES WILL SOON ALLOW MEMBERS OF THIS EMBASSY STATIONED IN BEIRUT TO CONTINUE THESE DISCUSSIONS AND TO RESUME THEIR NORMAL FUNCTIONS IN ALL PARTS OF LEBANON. WE BELIEVE LETTER ALONG THESE LINES MIGHT HELP KEEP HOUGHTON/MACK VISIT IN LOW-KEY FRAME DEPT DESIRES AND WOULD ALSO TIE IT AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE TO THIS EMBASSY.

5. WE ASSUME HOUGHTON/MACK WILL BE CARRYING SAME COMMO GEAR ARRANGED FOR DJEREJIAN. IF SO, SUGGEST CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY STAY AT MONTEMAR HOTEL, SEA SIDE. WE WILL FOLLOW PROCEDURES OUTLINED BEIRUT 6937 UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE. IF HOUGHTON AND MACK NEED ASSISTANCE FROM KHAWAND, THEY CAN INFORM US BY RADIO WHEN THEY ARRIVE AND WE WILL GET WORD TO HIM.

6. RE PARA 4, REFTEL B, ASSUME WE SHOULD NOT RPT NOT INFORM KARAME (AND POSSIBLY SAEB SALAM) OF

HOUGHTON/MACK VISIT UNTIL AFTER THEY HAVE MADE
CONTACT WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN JOUNIEH. SINCE
THIS MAY NOT HAPPEN UNTIL SATURDAY, AUG 21, THEY
MAY HEAR IT ON THE RADIO BEFORE WE CAN REACH THEM.
HUNT

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